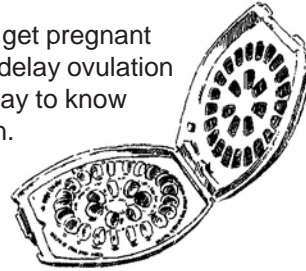


12 BREASTFEEDING FACT SHEET

BIRTH CONTROL, SEX AND BREASTFEEDING

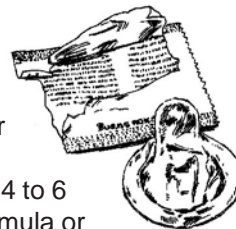
Use Birth Control

Use birth control if you do not want to get pregnant again right away. Breastfeeding may delay ovulation (release of egg cell), but there is no way to know just when you will start ovulating again. The more you nurse, the greater the chance ovulation will be delayed.



These birth control methods can be used right after birth. They will not reduce or change your breastmilk.

- “Mini-pill” (progestin only) may be used starting 2 to 3 weeks after giving birth.
- Depo-provera (the shot) may be used starting 6 weeks after giving birth. Some women who take progesterone develop postpartum depression
- Norplant implant may be used starting 6 weeks after giving birth.
- Condom
- Exclusive “on-demand” breastfeeding for the first 6 months after birth provides effective birth control. Breastfeed every 4 to 6 hours, including during the night. No formula or supplements should be used.
- Tubal ligation (sterilization) can be done after birth. It is permanent birth control.



If you have been using a diaphragm or cervical cap, it needs to be re-fitted after birth. Have this done at your 6-week check up. The cervical cap is less effective after childbirth. If you wish to use an I.U.D. you may need to wait until 8 weeks after birth.

Talk with your partner and pick the method that best meets your needs.

When to Have Sex

Wait until your lochia (vaginal discharge) has stopped flowing and your vagina is healed. This takes 2 to 6 weeks. Sex should not hurt. If it does, you may not be totally healed. Try again at a later time.

BREASTFEEDING TRIAGE TOOL

Dry or Sore Vagina

Your vagina may be more dry than usual while you are breastfeeding. To increase wetness and help relax your vagina:

- Spend more time on foreplay – bathe, give backrubs, listen to music, talk.
- Put water-based lubricant on the penis or at the opening to your vagina (K-Y jelly, Slippery Stuff). DO NOT use oil-based products like Vaseline.
- Try different positions to see which feel most comfortable. A side-by-side position where you face your partner takes some pressure off the vagina.

Changes in Sex Drive

Many couples notice changes in their pattern of love-making because the baby needs attention day and night at unpredictable times, and you are tired and your moods are different.

Take advantage of moments when you feel rested and sexual and baby is asleep. It may be a different time than you usually make love; enjoy the change. Tiredness does go away as your baby gets older and you get more rest. Do what feels right to you and your partner.

Ways to Feel Close in Addition to Sexual Intercourse

It is important to keep your feelings of love and closeness to your partner while you are adjusting to having a baby. Here are some ways to show love and affection for your partner:

- Cuddle
- Hold hands
- Talk
- Kiss
- Touch and massage

Breasts – Sexual Pleasure or Feeding

Couples often notice changes in their feelings about the breasts. Many women feel sexual stimulation during breastfeeding. This is common and normal. Questions to talk over.

- Are breasts for sexual pleasure or just for feeding the baby.
- Is it OK to breastfeed in public or in front of friends and family?
- Who do the breasts “belong to” – you, your partner or the baby?
- There are no right or wrong answers. It's up to you.